

Hathersage St Michael's CofE (Aided) Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 112885 |
| Local Authority | Derbyshire |
| Inspection number | 311039 |
| Inspection dates | 24–25 September 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Rajinder Harrison |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 145 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Gerald Furness |
| Headteacher | Mr Andrew Poole |
| Date of previous school inspection | 24 January 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | School Lane Hathersage Derbyshire S32 1BZ |
| Telephone number | 01433650434 |

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| Age group | 4–11 |
| Inspection dates | 24–25 September 2008 |
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Fax number

01433659761

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Almost all the pupils are of White British origin. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average. These pupils' needs are mainly moderate learning difficulties. An average proportion has a statement of special educational needs. Children start in the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are above the levels expected for their age.

The school has on-site provision for childcare before, during and after the school day that is not under the management of the school's governing body.

Key for inspection grades

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| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and pupils' personal development are good. Pupils behave well, form good relationships and trust all the adults who work with them. Pupils feel safe at school and are confident that staff will listen to them if they have any worries, and deal with any incidents promptly. Pupils enjoy learning, show respect for others and take responsibilities willingly. They understand well the importance of staying fit and healthy and participate enthusiastically in the many clubs and activities the school organises. Parents are generally positive about the school. A few raised concerns about not having their views considered or being consulted enough. The school's communication systems are generally good and parents are encouraged to raise any concerns with staff or governors.

Good teaching and a good curriculum in the Foundation Stage help children in the Reception class to achieve well and many exceed the levels expected at the end of this first year. Elsewhere in the school, pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory as a result of satisfactory teaching. Where teaching is good, lessons challenge pupils well and learning is good, but some lessons are not as demanding, particularly of the more able. Consequently, the rate of progress varies from good in a few lessons, to less than acceptable in one or two. In these lessons teachers fail to match work to pupils' needs accurately enough to challenge all pupils fully, particularly in writing where standards at the end of Year 6 are below average. Overall standards, however, remain above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils who need extra help with their learning achieve satisfactorily because they receive appropriate individual support. The curriculum is satisfactory. While enrichment activities are good, pupils have too few opportunities to practise their skills in writing at length. Pastoral care is good. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils' progress is monitored closely and pupils have individual targets. However, teachers do not always use the information well enough to challenge pupils fully in all lessons.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and staff ensure the school runs in an orderly manner and that pupils are happy and secure. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning lacks rigour and not enough is done to check that every teacher plans tasks that will help all pupils work to their full capability in every lesson and in every subject. While the school's self-assessment is optimistic, improvements since the last inspection, that include children's good achievement in the Foundation Stage, provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and improved accommodation, show that leaders have satisfactory capacity to make further improvements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good links with the pre-school help children settle into the school confidently. Care and welfare arrangements are good, an aspect many parents appreciate, a typical comment being, 'My child loves school and can't wait to get here'. Good relationships between home and school help children gain confidence and independence. Staff provide individual support within a safe and secure learning environment. As a result, children achieve well with many working confidently at above the expected levels in all the areas of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage.

With a good balance of adult-led tasks and those children select for themselves, a lively programme of activities encourages children to have fun as they explore all that is offered. For

example, imaginative role-play areas encourage children to act out stories and practical tasks allow them to experiment with materials such as paint and water. Children love to share their ideas and listen considerately to others.

Leadership and management are good. Improvements in the teaching of literacy, particularly word building skills, have resulted in higher standards in this area. Staff check that children try everything including those activities that some find more challenging, for example writing. Effective assessment procedures identify how well children achieve, but the more able children are not challenged enough. Staff make good use of the grounds and visits to give children opportunities to explore the wider world, but the outside areas do not have adequate facilities for children to work outside during adverse weather conditions.

What the school should do to improve further

- Monitor teaching and learning more rigorously to ensure that work is closely matched to the needs of all pupils and that it challenges them fully so that they make the progress of which they are capable in every class and in all subjects.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to write independently and at length so that they make better progress and attain higher standards.
- Ensure teachers use the assessment information to plan lessons and set pupils' the targets they need to achieve more.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards in reading, mathematics and science are generally above average throughout the school. However, pupils' progress is not consistent from class to class and hence pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is not consistently demanding enough to secure better progress. At the end of Year 6, the overall standards in English are just above average but this is because reading is a strength. Standards in writing are below average, particularly at the higher levels. Pupils generally have too few opportunities to practise their writing skills independently and at length. The introduction of a new writing programme and more emphasis on developing pupils' word building skills are beginning to rectify this weakness but the more able pupils are still not challenged enough. Pupils who need help with their learning receive appropriate support to achieve as well as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good attendance reflects their enthusiasm for school. They enjoy learning and try their best even when lessons are uninspiring or tasks unclear. Behaviour is good and pupils are polite and friendly. They work and play safely at all times. They help others, for example, to clear tables at lunchtimes and to help younger ones. Pupils understand well the importance of sensible eating and regular exercise to sustain good health. Many enjoy numerous sports activities and select healthy lunch options. Pupils contribute well to the school and the wider community. For example, school council members organise social events and pupils participate enthusiastically in recycling, fund raising and community events such as summer fairs. Pupils express their

opinions confidently and understand why school is important. Their good personal skills and above average academic standards prepare them well for the future. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, but their understanding of the many cultural traditions represented in modern Britain is not as well developed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In a few classes consistently good teaching helps pupils achieve well. Elsewhere, too many lessons are satisfactory. This prevents pupils' overall progress from being better than satisfactory. The best lessons take good account of pupils' varying needs and are planned well to hold their interest and enthusiasm. For example, good use of interactive whiteboards to present information, and frequent opportunities to discuss their ideas help pupils learn effectively. Regular opportunities to work independently, encourage pupils to tackle new tasks with greater confidence. However, too often, the work is not matched closely enough to the full range of needs in the class. Occasionally, all the pupils in a class do the same work regardless of their ability. Teachers focus too much on pupils completing tasks rather than extending their knowledge and skills. Sometimes teachers talk for too long and direct learning too much. Consequently, pupils struggle to sustain concentration and interest. Teaching assistants ensure pupils who need additional help participate fully in all activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils find the exciting visits, visitors and good opportunities for practical activities, for example in art and design, physical education, science and music stimulating and fun. The enrichment programme is a strength but provision for other subjects, including developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills is mainly satisfactory. The school has started to devise a more creative curriculum to meet pupils' needs and interests. It uses the local area well to promote pupils' good understanding of environmental issues. Standards in reading are rising through improved strategies to develop reading skills, but pupils have too few opportunities to write independently in different subjects. At present, the work is often too directed and lacks sufficient challenge to accelerate pupils' progress to a good rate. Appropriate work is planned to support pupils who need extra help with their learning so that they make satisfactory progress. A good personal, social and health education programme supports pupils' good personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care arrangements are good. Child protection, safeguarding of pupils and health and safety procedures are robust. Staff take prompt action if pupils raise any concerns. The arrangements to welcome new pupils and support those moving to other schools are good. Pupils who need specific educational support are guided sensitively and external agencies are involved where necessary.

Senior managers gather valuable information regarding pupils' progress but not all teachers use this well enough to secure good progress in every class. Pupils talk confidently about having individual targets but are not as sure as to why they have that target and are rarely asked to

check their work to see if they have met their target. A number of pupils say that their targets are too easy. The practice of setting challenging individual targets is inconsistent. Similarly, while most teachers offer pupils helpful guidance through marking, the practice is inconsistent and teachers rarely identify when pupils have achieved their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and his staff successfully promote a climate where pupils enjoy learning. Many parents and members of the community volunteer regular support to help enrich pupils' learning and personal development. The school recognises it needs to do more to help pupils explore the diversity in modern British society. While improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, the school has not tackled the issue of challenging pupils enough to raise standards. The procedures to monitor and evaluate the school's performance and act more quickly lack rigour. Senior managers produce valuable assessment data but do not check that all teachers use this information to secure higher standards. Subject leaders review their subjects regularly but fail to ensure that pupils' build on previous learning effectively. Good financial management ensures that priorities, for example staff training, are adequately resourced but the impact of this training on pupils' learning is not measured closely. Through regular visits and discussions with staff, governors have a sound overview of the school's work but they have not challenged enough the under achievement that occurs in one or two classes. Governors are very supportive and successfully promote satisfactory links with other schools and organisations.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being? | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 2 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress | 3 |

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs? | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 |

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 3 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 3 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

26 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hathersage St Michael's C of E (Aided) Primary School, Hathersage, S32 1BZ.

I am writing to tell you what I found when I came to your school recently. Thank you for making me welcome and for being so friendly and polite. I enjoyed talking with you about your school, the good friends you make and the activities you do. You told me that you feel safe at school and that staff help you if you have problems. The school is certainly a friendly place and it was nice to see you play and work together so sensibly. You look after each other and do kind things, like raising money for charities. You said that you are happy in school and really enjoy all the sports clubs and other fun activities the teachers organise. You know how to look after yourselves and understand the need for regular exercise. I enjoyed having lunch with you and was pleased to see that so many of you eat healthy food. I saw how well you all behave and you explained quite clearly how teachers deal promptly with any incidents of bad behaviour. It was really good to know that there is no bullying in the school now. It was particularly lovely to see how well all the new children in the Reception class have settled and that they enjoy school too. Their wall painting really brightened up the playground!

While I found that there are some good things about your school, some things could be better. Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. You always try to do your best, but I know you could do harder work. You do well in many subjects but you could achieve higher standards, especially in writing. I have asked teachers to help you to make faster progress, particularly in writing. To help with this, I would like teachers to make all your lessons really exciting and challenging and to give you lots more time to write about things that interest you. I have also asked the school's leaders to check very carefully on how well you learn in every class.

There are things you can do to help too. For example, you could ask for harder work if it is too easy and ask teachers to give you targets that will help you achieve more. Keep on working hard and doing your best.

I hope that you will all do well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison

Lead inspector